

VZCZCXYZ0020
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKKH #0546 0611314
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 021314Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1707

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000546

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/SPG, AF/PD (A. JOHNSON, P. EHRNMAN), RRU-AF

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [PREL](#) [SCUL](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: JUBA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS RIOT IN KHARTOUM

¶1. SUMMARY. On Feb 11, a serious student riot occurred at the University of Juba's Kadoro Campus in Khartoum following the refusal of university officials to establish a student union. Many observers, however, believe that the true purpose of the riot was to force the University to return to Juba. END SUMMARY.

Riot Rashomon

¶2. Newspapers reported violent rioting at the University of Juba's main campus in Kadoro, on the outskirts of Khartoum. Students set fire to nine vehicles belonging to the university and its staff, vandalized the chemistry lab and a new computer lab, and damaged two generators. The staff was able to intervene and save the library from being burned.

¶3. Two days earlier, the Juba University's Alliance of Political Associations had given administrators a Feb 11 deadline to reestablish a student union. When the university missed that deadline, the group said the riots started when their meeting "got out of hand" (Al-Hayat daily, Feb. 12).

¶4. Another student group, the African National Front (ANF), claimed the riots began because southern students were angry that the university was not working to return to the south, and was even building new facilities in Kadoro (The Citizen, Feb. 13). The ANF felt any new facilities should be built in Juba.

¶5. University officials said that the riots started at a meeting to discuss revising the student constitution to allow unions. The university claims the Dean of Students was attacked upon entering the meeting room, which ignited the pandemonium and rioting.

Aftermath And Comment

¶6. Press reports that 51 students were arrested (Al-Hayat, Feb. 12) and the University has been closed until further notice. Many southerners believe that returning the university to Juba will help cement southern legitimacy; during CPA celebrations Government of southern Sudan (GoSS) President Salva Kiir called for the immediate return of all three southern universities (Juba, Upper Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal). It is now unclear when, and where, the university will re-open.

Background

¶7. The university has been resistant to forming student unions because of their history of leading radical political movements in Sudan. Student elections have frequently been a source of violence.

¶8. The university was founded in 1977 in Juba, but moved to Khartoum in 1989 because of the war. The Kadoro campus opened in 2002. The university has greatly expanded in Khartoum, and now has about 10,000 students. Many of the students, teachers and administrators are northerners. Some facilities and faculty members are shared between different Khartoum universities. In Juba, there is currently only a small arts and associate degree program, and the facilities are extremely limited after being looted and occupied as militia barracks during the civil war.

STEINFELD